

| Knowledge / Path of release        | Focal object                                                                                                         | Object of direct realization             |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| First <b>Dharma-knowledge</b>      | Truths of suffering                                                                                                  | Emptiness of the truths of suffering     |
| Second <b>Dharma-knowledge</b>     | Truths of origin                                                                                                     | Emptiness of the truths of origin        |
| Third <b>Dharma-knowledge</b>      | Truths of cessation                                                                                                  | Emptiness of the truths of cessation     |
| Fourth <b>Dharma-knowledge</b>     | Truths of the path                                                                                                   | Emptiness of the truths of the path      |
| First <b>subsequent-knowledge</b>  | First Dharma-knowledge (i.e. the uninterrupted path that directly realizes the emptiness of the truths of suffering) | Emptiness of the first Dharma-knowledge  |
| Second <b>subsequent-knowledge</b> | Second Dharma-knowledge (i.e. the uninterrupted path that directly realizes the emptiness of the truths of origin)   | Emptiness of the second Dharma-knowledge |
| Third <b>subsequent-knowledge</b>  | Third Dharma-knowledge (i.e. the uninterrupted path that directly realizes the emptiness of the truths of cessation) | Emptiness of the third Dharma-knowledge  |
| Fourth <b>subsequent-knowledge</b> | Fourth Dharma-knowledge (i.e. the uninterrupted path that directly realizes the emptiness of the truths of the path) | Emptiness of the fourth Dharma-knowledge |

Like the eight forbearances, the eight knowledges of the path of seeing are equivalent since a path of release focuses on *all* phenomena and the division into eight knowledges is merely from the point of view of selecting eight of those focal objects.

This completes the presentation of the *sixteen instants*.

The following are explanations of the path of seeing given in commentaries on the *Ornament*:

Haribhadra says in his *Commentary Illuminating the Meaning*:

"The Teacher [Buddha] gives instructions on the path of seeing [by teaching]: 'The path of seeing: [its focal object] pertains to the four noble truths and [it is] of the very nature of the sixteen instants – the entity of Dharma and subsequent forbearance and knowledge. A yogi realizes that all phenomena lack a [true] nature. Therefore, he is a being who is like a magician free from full adherence to [the true existence of] all [phenomena], and who thoroughly meditates on the direct antidote to the objects of abandonment.'"

Gyalsab je says in his *Ornament of the Essence*:

"[The following sutric passage]: 'Subhuti, increase the confidence of Bodhisattva Mahasattvas by cultivating [their] Perfection of Wisdom' is an instruction [by the Buddha] about the path of seeing because it instructs by way of teaching that the path of seeing meditates thoroughly on the direct antidotes to the intellectually acquired objects of elimination.

What is the path of seeing? [Its focal] object pertains to the four noble truths and [it is] an object-possessor that is of the very nature of the sixteen instants – it is the entity of Dharma and subsequent forbearance and knowledge (i.e. Dharma-forbearance, subsequent-forbearance, Dharma-knowledge, and

subsequent-knowledge). What person [realizes and meditates on the following]? A yogi realizes that all phenomena lack a [true] nature. Furthermore, he is a being who, like a magician, does not fully adhere to [the true existence of] all [phenomena] and who meditates.

The path of seeing, as well as the way of generating it, will be explained below. Here, just understand well the explanation in [Vimuktisena's] *Illumination of [the Perfection of Wisdom Sutra in] Twenty Thousand [Verses]* of the reason for [the Buddha] directing Subhuti to teach the path of seeing."

Lama Tsongkhapa says in his *Golden Rosary*:

"What is the subject-matter [of the instructions]? [The subject-matter] is the path of seeing. The way [in which the instructions are given]: [The instructions are given] by way of teaching 'One must thoroughly meditate on the path of seeing that is of the very nature of the sixteen instants'.

Who meditates? A yogi who has the yoga of calm abiding and special insight in his mental continuum and who, since he realizes that all phenomena lack a true nature, is a being who is free from full adherence to [the true nature of all phenomena]. For what purpose [does he meditate]? [He meditates to cultivate] the direct antidote to the objects of elimination of the path of seeing that the path of seeing must eliminate. What is an analogy for [a yogi] who is free from adherence [to the true nature of phenomena]? [Such a yogi] is like a magician who does not fully adhere to the magical illusions he conjures up.

What are the sixteen instants [of the path of seeing]? The path of seeing [constitutes] four Dharma-forbearances, four Dharma-knowledges, four subsequent-forbearances, and four subsequent-knowledges that relate to each of the [four noble] truths, with [the focal objects] the four truths pertaining to the object possessor [the path of seeing]."

This completes the presentation of the ninth of the ten topics of Mahayana practice instructions, the [Mahayana] path of seeing.

Next follows the tenth topic, the [Mahayana] path of meditation.

## **THE MAHAYANA PATH OF MEDITATION**

The Mahayana path of meditation is presented under the following outline:

### **1. *Instructions on the antidote to innate objects of abandonment***

But before presenting the descriptions of the path of meditation provided in the commentaries on the *Ornament*, here is a general presentation of this type of path:

As mentioned earlier, the first moment of the meditative equipoise directly realizing emptiness that serves as the direct antidote to the coarsest innate afflictive obstructions and is generated after the subsequent attainment paths of the Mahayana path of seeing marks the first moment of the Mahayana path of meditation.

Etymologically, the path of meditation is a path that continuously *meditates* on or familiarizes itself with the direct realization of emptiness that was newly achieved on the path of seeing. So, unlike Bodhisattvas on the path of seeing, who settle into the meditative equipoise that directly realizes emptiness only once, Bodhisattvas on the path of meditation repeatedly settle into such meditative equipoise. The reason for this is that the meditative equipoise paths on the path of meditation serve as direct antidotes to any of the innate afflictive or cognitive obstructions. However, as opposed to intellectually acquired afflictive obstructions, which can be removed in one meditative session, innate afflictive and cognitive obstructions are more difficult to eliminate. Therefore, they are removed in stages, by first eradicating the coarser types of innate afflictive obstructions and then step by step the subtler types.

Only after attaining the cessation of the subtlest innate *afflictive* obstructions are Bodhisattvas able to gradually eliminate the coarser and subtler layers of the *cognitive* obstructions. Through meditation, that is, familiarity (as well as the increasing force of Bodhicitta), the uninterrupted paths in the continua of Bodhisattvas on the path of meditation become increasingly powerful and thus able to serve as the antidote to increasingly subtle obstructions.

Vasubhandu compares this process to removing the stains on a cloth. Since it is easier to wash out the larger or coarser stains on a cloth, they are removed first. For the smaller or subtler stains one requires a stronger cleaning agent. Likewise, for the subtler obstructions Bodhisattvas require stronger uninterrupted paths.

